Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current
scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

BUILDING CONNECTICUT SOIL

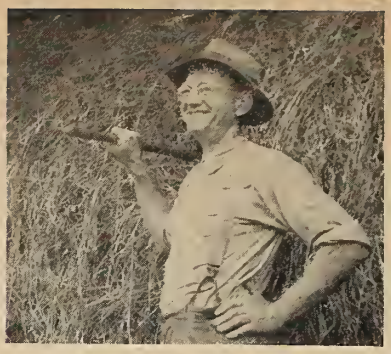
THE AAA PROGRAM HELPS PUT A FIRM PASTURE-HAY FOUNDATION UNDER CONNECTICUT'S DAIRY FARMING

LIBRARY
CURRENT SERIAL RECORD
MAR 1-1 1946
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
CONNECTICUT AAA COMMITTEE

PROGRAM AID NO. 1
JANUARY 1946

RAYMOND K. CLAPP

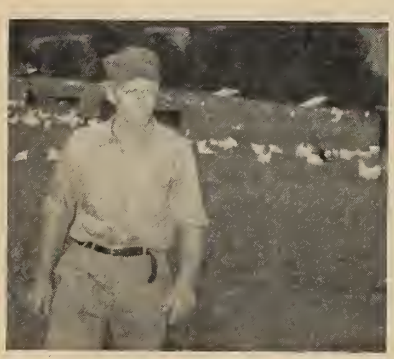


DWIGHT J. MINOR, Chairman

GOTTFRED BAHLER

HERBERT B. HUBBELL

CARLYLE H. GOWDY



JULIAN B. THAYER

THE SOIL IS THE FOUNDATION

The Connecticut State Triple-A Committee is responsible for the administration of the Agricultural Conservation program in the State. The committee is made up of five farmers and the director of the State Agricultural Extension Service. The State AAA office is at 95 Washington Street, Hartford, Conn.

We, the State AAA Committee, present this brief pamphlet to indicate how the program operates and what it has done to improve the soils on Connecticut dairy farms. We hope that the few examples shown here will inspire other farmers to take part in the program.

The farms and the farmers are not presented as models. However, these farmers have used the program effectively, and they have developed efficient farming systems based on building and maintaining their soil. Our hats are off to the men who operate these farms—for an important job well done.

The AAA program is not solely responsible for the results obtained. Back of the AAA soil-building practices lie the research of the Agricultural Experiment Station and the teachings of the Extension Service.

The farms reported on here are all dairy farms. Some other time we hope to present a similar report on other types of farms.

941747

Dairy farming is presented first because milk production is number one in Connecticut's agriculture, and because dairy success is so intimately tied to the quality of hay, pasture, and soil. The dairy farmer cannot stand the competition without top-quality hay and pasture. A few may make it, of course, if they can get especially high prices for milk. But for the general run of farmers there must be plenty of good pasture and forage. Good pasture and forage mean plenty of clover or alfalfa in the hay and pasture mixture.

And speaking of mixtures, scientists did dairymen an especially good turn a few years ago, when they brought out Ladino clover. Ladino is a perennial. It is not like red and alsike clover—producing a good crop one year and then nothing the next. Of course the land has to be well fertilized and managed to keep even Ladino thriving throughout the season and year after year. Ladino furnishes good pasture all the summer—through the heat of July and August. And, since most everything else quits about that time, that is when we really need it.

To succeed with clover and alfalfa, the land needs plenty of lime, phosphoric acid, and usually, potash. And that is where the AAA program comes in. It has helped thousands of farmers of the State to get and to use these essential minerals—and to start on farming systems which maintain and improve the soil.

We made a survey this spring and found that in the last 4 years the acreage of clover and alfalfa has increased by 50 percent. At the same time the acreage of fertilized pasture has doubled. These improved pastures and hay lands are now getting to the point where they really amount to something. Today there are enough of them to feed half the cows in the State the year round on top quality feed. If we can keep up the present rate of progress, there will be enough for all our cows in from 6 to 8 years.

Those who are not farmers can scarcely appreciate the significance of the struggle Connecticut farmers have made to put a firm foundation under their dairy industry—a foundation that will last and insure the quantity and quality of food products needed for a strong people. Today, Connecticut farmers are well on their way toward their goal.

And speaking of quality—we are sure that milk produced from fields enriched with essential minerals is itself richer in the things needed for strong bones, sound teeth, and vigorous health. We believe that the people of Connecticut can look forward to raising children that are happier, healthier, and stronger because, in restoring to our soils the elements needed to produce crops, we are also restoring the essentials of good nutrition.

We are proud of the men on the farms presented here and the thousands of others like them. And we are proud that Connecticut's farmers and their organizations are aware of the need for concerted action if the soils of the Nation are to be saved.

THE CONNECTICUT STATE AAA COMMITTEE: [1]

Dwight J. Minor, Chairman, *Bristol.*
Gottfred Bahler, *Rockville.*
Julian B. Thayer, *Rockfall.*
Herbert B. Hubbell, *Woodbridge.*
Carlyle H. Gowdy, *Greenwich.*
Raymond K. Clapp, *Storrs.*

[1] The Connecticut State AAA Committee has been incorporated into the Field Service Branch, Production and Marketing Administration, of the United States Department of Agriculture.

678573°—46

MORE MILK—BETTER MILK—LESS COST

Thirty-Six Loads of Hay in 1944—Five Loads to Start With.

When Edwin Osborne moved on to his farm in Fairfield County in 1934, he cut 43 loads of hay. Today he cuts about 125 loads and also does a lot of pasturing.

The pictures tell the story of accomplishment. The upper one shows an 8-acre field which yielded 36 loads of hay (plus 1 pasturing) in 1944. This field cut 5 loads of hay before it was improved.

Here's how it was done: In 1943 he applied 3 tons of lime, 500 pounds of superphosphate, and 200 pounds of potash and seeded 12 pounds of alfalfa and 2 pounds of timothy to the acre. In 1944 the field was treated with 500 pounds of superphosphate, 200 pounds of potash, and 20 pounds of boron per acre.

The lower picture shows some of the Osborne Holsteins in a luxuriant Ladino pasture. Before this pasture was seeded the land was treated with lime, 500 pounds of superphosphate, and 200 pounds of potash per acre. It was seeded to 1½ pounds Ladino, 4 pounds red clover, and 4 pounds orchard grass to the acre. Each year after seeding it has had 300 pounds of superphosphate and 150 pounds of potash per acre.

With enough pasture of this kind to turn in the cows 2 hours each day during the growing season, grain feeding has been cut down to 1 pound of grain to each 7 or 8 pounds of milk. The result—more and better milk.

Two Hours a Day on this Pasture Means Less Grain.

GOOD HAY AND PASTURE FROM ROUGH LAND

Just Beyond the Stone Wall—A Newly Planted Ladino Pasture

Above, L. Henry Reed of Coventry, Tolland County, is standing in a rocky hillside field. A few years ago his whole farm looked like that. Just beyond the stone wall is a newly-planted pasture which has had one season's growth. After treatment with lime and superphosphate the field was planted last spring to Ladino clover and orchard grass.

Below, the Reed Holsteins are grazing on a fertilized permanent pasture. Mr. Reed says, "There used to be so many birches here you couldn't see the cows." The white clover developed as a result of liming and fertilizing.

Without adding to his land holdings, the Tolland County dairyman has improved his hay and pasture in a few years until he has more than doubled the size of his herd and it now produces about $900 worth of milk a month. His pasture is so good that he feeds only about 1 pound of grain for each 8 pounds of milk. Before he started the pasture improvement, he was selling about $150 worth of milk a month and it cost him about half of that for grain.

Milk Production Jumped from $150 to $900 per Month

PLENTY OF LIME AND FERTILIZER TO KEEP UP PRODUCTION

When A. G. Ennis and his son Morrison started operating Kingswood farm, Brooklyn, Conn., about 15 years ago, the place would barely carry 8 to 10 cows. Now they have 50 head on the place, 30 to 35 of them milkers, and all are doing well.

The land on the Ennis farm is a bit lighter than that in many parts of the State, and alfalfa is the chief hay crop. The rotation is pretty much in line with that used on other Connecticut farms where there is a soil building job to do while keeping up the milk flow.

Here's the Ennis system: Corn for 2 or 3 years, with rye for winter cover; then 15 pounds of alfalfa with a half pound of Ladino seeded with oats (the oats are grazed or put in the silo); then alfalfa for several years.

Plenty of lime and fertilizers play their part in building up and keeping up hay and pasture production. Most of the cropland has been well limed and from now on liming will be based upon soil tests.

For every acre manured, superphosphate is applied by way of the gutters in the dairy barns at the rate of about 500 pounds per acre per year. Potash is applied at seeding time at the rate of about 300 pounds per acre and thereafter 150 pounds annually. Again the pattern is like that of many dairy farms in the area and the results are equal to those that are generally obtained on Connecticut's good dairy farms.

The Place Would Carry 8 to 10 Cows, and not too Well at That

Now 50 Head on the Ennis Farm, and All Doing Well

COURAGE, PLUS KNOW-HOW, PLUS AAA

Hardhack and Blueberries—Well Pruned by Hungry Cows

It takes courage and know-how to get ahead under the conditions shown above. All of Aldo Gasparino's pastures in New London County looked like this when he started in 1939. The one pictured is on the list to be improved next. Hardhack and blueberries—well pruned in the past by hungry cows—cover three-quarters of the land.

Here's the Gasparino pasture-improvement prescription: (1) Plenty of rough and tough work with a bush and bog harrow, (2) Lime to sweeten the soil; one year he used all his AAA lime on one pasture, (3) 500 pounds of complete fertilizer per acre, and (4) Ladino clover and orchard grass in oats. Result: 10 times the feed!

Mr. Gasparino is using this improvement treatment on about 4 acres a year. He rotates his grazing from one field to the other to get maximum production of forage and milk.

At present he has about 35 acres of mixed clover, alfalfa, and grass hay. Annually this land is limed and fertilized with superphosphate and potash. The result: Enough hay for the 30 cows and young stock, and some supplementary pasture in late summer. In contrast when the Gasparino's bought the place the farm carried about 10 cows and 6 young stock. By continuing the present soil improvement program, he expects to reduce grain needs to a minimum and still keep up milk production.

Increased from 16 to 30 Head Since 1939

Good Holsteins on Good Pasture—Gottfred Bahler Farm, Rockville

FOR NOW AND THE FUTURE

The improvement plan on the few farms pictured here is a simple program of fitting the soil to grow good grasses, Ladino clover, and alfalfa. The soil is built up by adding the right amounts of lime, superphosphate, and potash. The time of applying the materials and the amounts and the methods of application will vary from farm to farm, but one way or another the necessary elements are added to the land so that the grasses and legumes will thrive. This is the simple formula for building up fine farms and fine herds—and supporting fine families.

The Aldo Gasparino Family, New London County

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1946